It Garden E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 ART Khasi ART

Syntengs plaster the space in front of the house with red earth and cow-dung, this custom being probably a remnant of Hindu influences. The Khasis have some peculiar customs when they build a new house. When the house is completed they perform a ceremony, *kyrpit-kha-shain*, when they tie three pieces of dried fish to the ridge pole of the house and then jump up and try to pull them down again. Or they kill a pig, cut a piece of the flesh with the skin attached, and fix it to the ridge pole, and then endeavour to dislodge it. The Syntengs at Nartiang worship U Bishawem (Biswakarma) and *Ka Siem Synshar* when a house is completed, two fowls being sacrificed, one to the former, the other to the latter. The feathers of the fowls are affixed to the centre post of the house, which must be of a *diang* swing, a variety of the Khasi oak. The worship of a Hindu god (Biswakarma), the architect of the Hindu gods, alongside the Khasi deity *Ka siem Synshar*, is interesting, and may be explained by the fact that Nartiang was at one time the summer capital of the kings of Jaintia, who were Hindus latterly and disseminated Hindu customs largely amongst the Syntengs. Mr. Rita says that amongst the Syntengs, a house, the walls of which have been plastered with mud, is a sign that the householder has an enemy. The plastering no doubt is essential as a preventive of fire, arson in these hills being a common form of revenge.

Amongst the Khasis, when a daughter leaves her mother's house and builds a house in the mother's compound, it is considered *seng*, or taboo, for the daughter's house to be built on the right-hand side of the mother's house, it should be built either on the left hand or at the back of the mother's house.

In Nongstoin it is customary to worship a deity called *u-Ki-Jop* (Khasi, *u* place), by nailing up branches of the Khasi oak, accompanied with jaw-bones of cattle and the feathers of fowls, to the principal post, which must be of a *diang* swing. The Siem priestess of the Nongkrem State at Smit and the ladies of the Siem family perform a ceremonial dance before a large post of oak in the midst of the Siem priestesses' house on the occasion of the annual goat-killing ceremony. This oak post is furnished according to custom by the Syngkon